



# copyright crash course

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## ownmanage share

### Copyright's role in the flow of teaching and research

Not too long ago, the only familiarity most of us had with copyright was the copyright notice inside the books we read. Most faculty members would have been aware of assigning a copyright to a publisher, but this was typically an inconsequential act. Today copyright has complicated ramifications throughout academic life.

You probably have an intuitive understanding of what copyright does, its importance in the creation and distribution of creative works -- books, journal articles, electronic publications, music, movies, software, artworks, sculpture. And you probably are aware that when you make and distribute copies of others' works to your students, or to research colleagues, it may be a fair use (and may not, as that's the problem with fair use -- it's not clearcut). And most of us by now know that massive public distribution of copyrighted works without the owners' permission over peer-to-peer networks is illegal. But these uses barely dip a toe in the waters.

Copyrights enable us to require that others attribute references to our work to us; they give us economic rights because we can trade them for publication which would otherwise prove too expensive a proposition, at least in the past. Today, however, we need not trade our copyrights for publication. The role of copyright in the flow of research is undergoing dramatic and exciting change. It's occurring at the margins right now, but it will one day extend to every aspect of scholarly endeavor. This is a very exciting time to be an academic. The options for scholarly communication have never been broader or more effective. You'll find discussion of copyright woven all through important aspects of research and teaching, such as

- the use of others' works in the classroom, in fieldwork, and the laboratory,
  - building on the works of others to create new works,
  - open source software development,
  - use and reuse of datasets,
  - Creative Commons licensing of educational resources,
  - open access to research results and its acceleration of the pace of scientific discovery,
- as well as orphan works, and

Copyright enables us and it throws stumbling blocks in our paths. If you take the time to learn a little bit about it, you can exploit its benefits and avoid its pitfalls. I invite you to explore the [Copyright Crash Course](#).

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